SHIPMAN

Series 9021
Bylaws

BOARD USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA
FIRST READING - 4/20/22

The Colchester Board of Education (the "Board") welcomes opportunities to share information and updates regarding the Board and its schools with members of the community. The Board recognizes that members of the community access information in a variety of ways, and that no single form of communication can effectively reach all those community members who may wish to receive information and updates about the Board and its schools.

In an effort to reach more members of the community, the Board seeks to diversify its methods of communication by introducing ~~a~~ social media platforms for communication~~s~~ by and about the Board and its schools (the "Social Media Platform(s)"). The Board hereby establishes the following rules and guiding principles regarding ~~the~~ Social Media Platforms.

1. **Management.** The Board shall charge the Communications Committee ~~*[Options: establish a Communications Committee which] or [designate a Board member (the "Designee") who]*~~ ~~shall be charged~~ with implementing and managing ~~the~~ any Social Media Platforms that represent the Board in a manner consistent with this policy and all applicable laws and rules, including, but not limited to, the Freedom of Information Act. To that end, the Communications Committee ~~[*Communications Committee/Designee*]~~ shall take the following steps, among any others determined to be necessary and/or appropriate:
    a. Identify and develop ~~a~~ Social Media Platforms.
    b. Establish a process for developing and approving content for ~~the~~ all Social Media Platforms.
    c. Ensure any public comment permitted on or through ~~the~~ Social Media Platforms is permitted in a manner consistent with this policy.
    d. Avoid discrimination by taking steps including, but not limited to, helping to make ~~the~~ Social Media Platforms accessible to individuals with disabilities.
    e. Consult with legal counsel, as appropriate, to ensure compliance with all applicable laws and rules regarding Social Media Platform content and accessibility.
    f. Seek feedback from and/or approval of the Board regarding any such matters concerning ~~the~~ Social Media Platforms (including, but not limited to, the matters above) as the Chairperson may request, or as ~~such~~ the Communications Committee ~~*Communications Committee/Designee*~~ may deem appropriate.

Compliance with the provisions above shall be deemed to constitute compliance

with Board Bylaw 9020, Public Statements, notwithstanding any provision to the contrary in Board Bylaw 9020.

2. **Content.** The purpose of ~~the~~ any Social Media Platforms administered by the Communications Committee is to share information and updates regarding the Board and its schools with members of the community. As such, the following categories of content are examples of those that generally are appropriate for inclusion in ~~the~~ Social Media Platforms:
    a. Board meeting agendas, minutes, reports, videos, and any other material reviewed, discussed, and/or presented during a Board and/or Board committee meeting.
    b. Communications previously shared with the school community by the Board, administration, and/or staff.
    c. Summaries of public meetings prepared and approved by the Board, a committee of the Board, or a Board designee (*e.g.*, a member of the administration).
    d. Summaries of school-related activities, events, and/or accomplishments prepared and approved by the Board, a committee of the Board, or a Board designee (*e.g.*, a member of the administration).

    The following categories of content are examples of those that generally are not appropriate for inclusion in ~~the~~ a Social Media Platform:
    a. Individual Board members opinions.
    b. Content intended to convince or persuade ~~(except for material reviewed, discussed, and/or presented during a Board meeting).~~
    c. Content that introduces new concepts or ideas not previously reviewed, discussed, and/or presented during a Board and/or Board committee meeting or by the administration.
    d. Content that violates any applicable laws or rules, including, but not limited to, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, state elections laws regarding expenditure of public funds during referenda, non-discrimination laws, and collective bargaining rules.

    The Board recognizes that there may be exceptions to the examples above in certain circumstances, and will consider content for ~~the~~ Social Media Platforms on a case-by-case basis consistent with the principles set forth in this policy.

3. **Citizens' Comments.**

    [The Board may select either option below.]

    [Option 1 – No Public Comment Permitted.]
    Given that the purpose of the Social Media Platform is to reach more members of the community with information and updates about the Board and its schools, provision for citizens' comments on or through the Social Media Platform is unnecessary. In accordance with Board Bylaw 9325, citizens may be permitted

to address the Board concerning any subject that lies within its jurisdiction during the portion of any Board meetings so designated for such purpose.

[Option 2 – Public Comment Permitted.]

The Board may permit any individual or group to post comments and/or respond to content on or through the Social Media Platform. Citizens' comments and responses shall be subject to the following guidelines:

a. All citizens who comment must identify themselves by name and address.
b. The Board will not respond to comments made on or through ~~the~~ a Social Media Platform, with the exception that the Chairperson only may respond if, in the discretion of the Chairperson, such comments require an immediate response.
c. The Board may not limit the subject of a citizen's comments, except that formal charges or formal complaints must be initiated in writing only in accordance with Policy 1312, General Complaint Procedures. Reasonable standards for decorum are expected.
d. No inappropriate or disrespectful comments or personal attacks shall be permitted on or through ~~the~~ a Social Media Platform. Persistence in such conduct shall be grounds for summary termination, by the ~~Chairperson~~ Communications Committee, of that person's privilege of posting comments on or through ~~the~~ a Social Media Platform.
e. No solicitation of goods or services shall be permitted on or through a Social Media Platform administered by Communications Committee.

The Communications Committee ~~*[Communications Committee/Designee*~~] may remove comments or content not in compliance with these guidelines, provided any such removal complies with the requirements of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.

This policy must be either posted on any Social Media Platform administered by the Communications Committee or linked to on said platform.

Legal References:

Connecticut General Statutes:

1-200	Definitions
1-225	Meetings of government agencies to be public. Recording of votes. Schedule and agenda of certain meetings to be filed and posted on web sites. Notice of special meetings. Executive sessions.

Federal Law:

U.S. Constitution Amendment, 1st

City of Madison v. Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission, 429 U.S. 167 (1976)

Felts v. Reed, 504 F. Supp. 3d 978, 984 (E.D. Mo. 2020)

ADOPTED:_____
REVISED:_____